

Central Cascades Winter Recreation Council (CCWRC)
March 4, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Mercer Island Library (Mercer Island, WA), 6:30 to 8:30p.m.

Attendees: Ellen Aagaard (Snowshoe Rep. & Secretary)
Karen Behm (At Large & President)
Shawn Bertagnole (Mountaineers, Meany Lodge groomer)
Don Brooks (Kongsberger & Snoqualmie Nordic)
Sharon Chen (Kongsberger)
Lauren DuRocher (USFS, Winter Rec., Cle Elum Ranger District)
Rune Harkestad (Kongsberger)
Doug Mercer (Snowplay)
Doug Sundberg (Ski for Light)
Glenn Tomchik (Kongsberger)
Nick Whitman (Landtek grooming contractor)
George Whyel (Washington Ski Touring Club)

Meeting began at 6:40 pm.

Introductions of attendees

Report from *Karen Behm*, President:

Budget Overview:

- Permit sales are 400k less than last year. Day permits have picked up with the recent snowfall. Seasonal permits are still down.
- There will be some cost savings due to the late snow, but recent snowfall has used up a significant portion of the snow removal budget.
- Thank you to the WSDOT plowers for blowing out Gold Creek.
- Discussion about the possibility of selling day passes at Crystal Springs using a card reader. Agreement that this could bring in positive revenue, and that the Mountaineers would be happy not to sell day passes to their Meany Lodge participants/have a card reader kiosk on-site instead. Karen will ask Pamela how successful the card readers have been and whether we can get more of them.
- Pamela says there is no State Parks support for extending the season, partially because it would require extending landowner and grooming contracts, and partially because the weather forecast predicts a warm-up, so it would be better to use cost-savings as carry-over for next year.
- In short, there should be carry-over budget for grooming, but the plowing money is almost used up for Cabin Creek and Crystal Springs; currently they are plowing the upper lot only at Cabin Creek and half the lot at Crystal Springs to save plow dollars.

Area Updates:

- *Crystal Springs/Erling Stordahl:* The grooming is great! Drainage problems much improved. Ski for Light Sat. March 8 and Sat. March 22nd. Request to Karen to advertise Ski for Light days as “double tracks” on the CCWRC weekly updates, since

there has been positive response from non-Ski for Light users as well to the double track sets.

- *Reminder from Lauren DuRocher:* Any ground disturbance work requires previous approval from USFS.
- *Lake Easton State Park/Iron Horse:* A question about why the State Parks grooming on the sledding hill, at Lake Easton, and on the Iron Horse has not been as consistent this year, even after recent snowfall. Josh White (LESP groomer operator) reports that there is a ton of snow at Lake Easton!
- *Hyak:* Discussion about grooming the Jente Loppet course once a week, if it could be done with a USFS permit. Widespread approval for this idea, as a trail extension, but understanding that the permit process could be difficult. Lauren will check to see whether it is even possible to get a permanent winter trail permit for the overlap area (North Bend ranger district, Cle Elum Ranger District, plus lake bed) wherein the Jente Loppet course lies.

Signage:

- The entrance sign at Erling Stordahl, pole signs, all are put up by volunteers. We would like to make the signage easier to place, remove, and store, and also make sure the signage is consistent, both within and among areas. Suggestion that appointing a “signage” person for each club/area might help make communication easier.
- Permanent signage (bulletin boards, signs on trees) needs approval from land managers.
- Temporary signage, if it has messaging on it, should also be checked with land manager (Lauren, for CC and CS) to make sure that it is consistent with USFS/State Parks messages, since it will be perceived as coming from that agency. Please check with Lauren for approval of any sign posted on USFS land at area Sno-Parks.
- A request for more voluntary non-motorized signs.

Website:

- CCWRC: It’s slowly getting more traffic!
- The new State Parks website has been displaying electronic grooming posts as well. A desire still exists to have more up-to-date communication from the State Parks groomer operators concerning Hyak sledding hill, Iron Horse, Lake Easton.

Fat Tire Bikes:

- They’re coming, so how can we educate about them? Should they be regulated?
- *Lauren DuRocher, USFS Winter Recreation Ranger:* For winter trails to be officially closed to bicycles they would need to go to a forest order process. This is time consuming and requires paperwork, so she suggests waiting until there is a problem (if there is a problem) to pursue regulation. Education has been shown to be more effective than regulation anyway.

- *Discussion about some possible ways to share winter trails effectively and safely among skiers and fat-tire bikers including the following:* 1. Alternate days on trail. 2. Designate some trails as “multi-use non-motorized” and available to skiers, snowshoers, dogs, fat-tire bikers. 3. Make a list of trails that would work well, either as multi-use, or as skier/biker trails, **and** a list of trails that we want to preserve as “skier only.” 4. Bring the fat-tire bikers to the table/invite them to CCWRC. Ellen will explore this and received agreement that we should invite a fat tire bike representative to our next meeting in april.

Miscellaneous items:

- *Shawn Bertagnole:* asked about the bright, flourescent orange poles on the Whittaker trail. He want them to mark trails and guide the groomer for the Meany Lodge trails. Nick replied that snow poles are expensive, and the sign budget of 10k is already expended for the year. Shawn thought he might be able to make such poles out of PVC pipe and orange tape.
- *Lauren DuRocher:* **Upper Yakima Plan:** There is a big push in the Cle Elum ranger district to get it out in March. Currently it is in the hands of the NEPA coordinator. Draft EA will be out for a 30-day comment period. Comments will be in the public record. Be as specific in those comments as possible. Winter recreation is a relatively small piece of the total plan. Lauren will send an email with a link to the Upper Yakima Draft EA when it is out so that CCWRC members and groups can read and comment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm. Whoo-hoo!

**Next meeting: Tuesday, April 8, 2014, 6:30-8:30pm, Mercer Island Library
(large meeting room next time)**